



NEXT ISSUE:
SUPPLEMENT ON
Pornography and
Censorship

Volume 1, Number 3, February 1, 1985

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ARCHIVES
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SUPPLEMENT LESBIAN MENT

Otherwise

A Feminist Newspaper at U of T



Off the wall is on the wall; Cathy Daley's Billboard outside A-Space on Spadina Avenue

Art in the Streets

By Tori Smith

Feminist artists are taking their message to the street and while it may not yet be a revolution it's certainly worth our attention. Cathy Daley and Daria Stermac have injected feminist content into media usually reserved for advertising bar bands and cigarettes. Daley has used the A Space gallery's billboard on Spadina Avenue (west side above Queen) to question the traditional wisdom on "The Other Woman". The piece reminds passers-by on foot and bus to look at the source to

find the meaning.

Daria Stermac, who's work is also sponsored by A Space, decided to give us all a hand in decoding the patriarchy. Each of the posters in her series bears the phrase "When we dead awaken", and uses images from advertising and pornography in juxtapositions which make their patriarchal function clear. By distributing these posters on the street for all to see she might succeed in changing the way we read the rest of the images 'out there'.

PETER MACCALLUM

"I Knew Somebody Who Was One Once"

Edited by Luanne Karn

"Homophobia" is not a commonly understood word. It is a word which has developed from a need to examine the oppression of gays and lesbians. It refers to an attitude which can range anywhere from a subtle feeling of discomfort around "effeminate" men or "masculine women" to the blatant condemnation of homosexuality.

Homophobia is related to "heterosexual privilege" in our society, that is the status and power which heterosexual couples hold in our society over single women, gay men and lesbians. By assuming that male-female relationships are "normal" and "good" and that homosexuality is "abnormal" or "bad", homophobic attitudes are encouraged and perpetrated.

In 1984, another student and I, carried out an exploratory study on the University of Toronto campus, which examined similarities and differences in male and female attitudes towards homosexuality. Although one of our hypotheses was that we expected women to be more tolerant of homosexuality than men, this did not prove to be the case.

Continued on page 6

MORE OTHERWISE

On Burning Boiled Eggs and Other Feminist Tactics Page 2

*Daddy Didn't Take the
T-Bird Away*

Smith On Sexist Texts

Page 9

*From Fairy Tale
to Junk Mail*

MacDonald Tracks the little Match Girl Down

Page 10

*Mary On Nancy On Nancy On Dale
Nancy On Mary On Nancy On Dale*

*And they called it Pulp-y Love
Lazier Tells a Story* Page 8

Growing Pains

By Helena van Hooten
 Coming as I do from a family which views feminists not only as child-murdering lesbians but also as the cause of homosexuality and the decline of the family, I am occasionally mystified as to how I ever came to be taking Women's Studies, let alone helping with a feminist newspaper. However, from the time at the age of two when I used to embarrass my mother by growling, "I a boy" from behind my pink ruffles, I have never been terribly impressed with my lot as a woman. It's not easy to be content as a woman when you have an uncle whose great concern for motherhood leads him to believe that all women with children under fourteen should be legislated into the home, or, when your father, as leader of the parish council, can enforce his belief that a woman's role in the church is to clean vestments and sit in the congregation. In my father's world, the only role suitable for a woman is taking care of men and children.

If I had been happily able to become the type of woman of whom my father approves, I would now be studying domestic sciences and filling my hope chest. But I'm about as handy at housework as an out of control bulldozer, I lay claim to being one of the few people who has successfully burnt a boiled egg, and the thought of giving lifelong support to some man makes me feel like sitting under a carpet and communing with imaginary penguins. Instead, I decided to take Women's Studies as a rebellion against what I'm expected to



KATE LAZER

be, simply because I'm a woman. I thought Intro Women's Studies would give me arguments that would silence my father forever; I thought it would tell me what real woman should be, and liberate me completely from a fate of dirty dishwater and diapers. That wasn't quite what I got. Women's Studies didn't give me the answers, it gave me questions and it made me think. I discovered that feminism isn't about rejecting motherhood and the care of others, but that it rejects that these jobs are degrading and unimportant, or that they are the only way a woman should spend her life. I was surprised to find that I had been unconsciously assuming for most of my life that "women's work" was unfulfilling and unimportant. I had assumed not just that, but that anything a woman

did was by nature inferior to what a man could do. To my horror I realized that I was almost as much of a misogynist as I considered my father to be.

I discovered too that feminism doesn't give a single set of rules on how to become a liberated woman. I found instead that it is a huge body of exploratory, conflicting and exciting thought on what it is to be a woman, and especially how society affects us as women. There were ideas I found ridiculous, and ideas I found startling and enlightening. However, what I have really come to see from my Women's Studies course is that the one who needs, first and foremost, to be freed from destructive assumptions and beliefs about women is not my father, nor society, but myself.

Carole Vance won a lot of hearts when she came to Toronto in January to promote her new book *Pleasure and Danger*. The long haired, soft-spoken anthropologist with a charming crooked smile, told an audience at OISE auditorium of the need for women to come to terms with each other's sexual differences in order to create a safe space where sex can be honestly discussed.

Her talk described with sensitivity the feminist zeitgeist of the 80's. In a climate of profound curiosity about sex women are discovering the sometimes unexpected aspects of their sexuality. These discoveries are traumatized by an obligation to sexual norms and an illusion of sexual equality which haunts feminist communities everywhere. From personal experience she described the power of social control through sexual slander: the conference she hosted at Barnard in 1982 had its diary books confiscated on the eve of opening by the university administration, and was picketed by Women Against Pornography feminists who distributed slanderous leaflets, naming by name certain conference members, accusing them of 'sexually deviant' behaviour. *Pleasure and Danger* is a collection of poems pictures and essays from that conference.

"All sexual acts are not equal" said Vance. She recommended that women stay clear of self-centered sexual thinking wherein some sexual practices are deemed correct, (such as caring monogamous lesbian relationships) and others are decided to be "sick, deranged, or sinful" (such as S/M, bathroom sex and butch-femme roles). Vance summed up poetically by saying that sex is a pleasure and pleasure is a power to which women have the fundamental right. —I.M.

"THEY'RE SPRAYING OUR SONG"

A Valentine Dance
 upstairs at 167 Church St.
 Saturday February 16th
 8:30 PM — 2:00 AM
 TICKETS: \$7/ door
 \$6/ at Women's Bookstore,
 Glad Day, and SCM Bookroom
 All Women Welcome

Are You Ready?

The best day of the year is coming soon, and details about the when and hows of International Women's Day are presently in the works. This year things are being run differently. March 8th Coalition member, Naomi Brooks says that this year there are "new faces, new concepts and a different way of organizing" with a special emphasis on outreach. This year's theme is "Still Ain't Satisfied! Women Organize For Change."

Working committees have been struck and meetings happen every Wednesday night at Metro's Central library. All women are welcome at 7:30 pm for those who want to help with the march, rally, fair or dance. —I.M.

THE NEW DEMOCRATS WOMEN'S CAUCUS Annual Conference

February 22nd

WILD ROSE 7:30 pm

examines the personal struggle of one working class woman on the Mesabi Iron Range.

February 23rd

WOMEN, PROSTITUTION and the Law

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 Trinity-St. Paul's
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Tickets \$6.00 advance \$7.00 door

"With her artistry, my poetry dances —
 becomes vivid pictures and silent clarity."
 Holly Near

Free childcare/wheelchair accessible
 This event is accessible to hearing impaired and hearing.
 For more information please call 925-6568 or 968-6320 TTY 964-2066

Prayers and Protest A Catholic Woman Speaks Out

By Laurie Bell

Just days before the last federal election a letter from Cardinal S. Emmett Carter was read from the pulpit of every Catholic church and in every Catholic school in the diocese of Toronto. Predictably, it condemned abortion, but its strongest statement was that there is unanimity on the issue of abortion within the Church. Further, all Catholics are bound to adhere to the Church's position. Unanimity is invoked for a plethora of issues in the Catholic church; abortion, homosexuality and the place of women are paramount among them.

The position of the Catholic Church on any issue is adopted by an all-male hierarchy. There is absolutely no place within the mechanics of the church structure where women have input. Thus, the official views of the Church may indeed be doctrine or law but they are not representative of the views of all Catholics.

It is no surprise that the effectiveness of the Church's position depends upon the public appearance of unanimity. But unanimity on abortion, homosexuality, and women, as with birth control, simply does not exist within the Catholic Church, least of all among Catholic women. Dispelling the myth of unanimity hinges upon declared Church positions. However, the strategy of public opposition has its perils.

Women who have been raised in "Catholic homes" and educated in the Catholic school system often have a difficult time coming to terms with issues affecting their own lives. Undoubtedly, these concerns will put them in conflict with their church, their families, and their tradition. Indoctrination is a difficult obstacle to overcome.

Recently, while reviewing my high school yearbook I noticed for the first time that there was a full-page ad by 'Campaign Life' reassuring students to oppose abortion now that they were voting citizens. In a Catholic school you get this message continually. We have a Catholic school board that prohibited students from writing letters to Washington, Ottawa, and Moscow about disarmament but devotes class time to petition and letter-writing campaigns against abortion. As one young woman asked me, "Why are we always given both sides of the nuclear arms question and only one side of the abortion issue?" Ignorance is the cornerstone of unanimity.

For those who do begin to question and to oppose the Church's position on issues like abortion, homosexuality, and the status of women, there is a rocky road ahead. There are, not surprisingly, countless women who leave the Catholic Church altogether. Unfortunately, we don't usually hear their dissatisfaction and dissent - it's not publicly expressed. For those who remain within the context of the Church in some way, there can be the feeling of not being understood or accepted within the Catholic community and not being understood or accepted within the feminist community. Feminist Catholics have taken to organizing themselves in order to support one another and to raise a collective, public voice of dissent - and they are taking risks in doing so. Women who have fought to obtain ministerial, administrative, and educational positions within the Church put those same jobs on the line when they publicly dissent.

Even so, the organization of feminist Catholics is an irreversible trend. In Toronto, based on this campus, there is the Canadian Catholics for Women's Ordination. Their forerunner in the U.S. is the Women's Ordination Conference, which has become quite a force with which the Church must contend.



KATE LAZIER

In the U.S. there are even more controversial groups making waves and rocking the patriarchy. The Conference of Catholic Lesbians states that it is "revolutionary to say we are both Catholic and lesbian. It is our task to create a church that accepts both." Not a very popular position to adopt.

Also in the U.S. exists Catholics for Free Choice. Presently 26 nuns, who were among 100 Catholics who signed an ad in the New York Times which recognized the pluralism existing on the abortion issue, stand to be removed from religious life by the Vatican unless they retract the statement. Only a couple of years ago Sister Mary Agnes Mansour was removed from her order by the Vatican because she was employed as Director of the Department of Human Services in Michigan. The jurisdiction of that department includes abortion counselling. She is only one of many who have lost their job or position due to their discontinuity with the Church's position. Meanwhile, a national survey found that only 11% of Catholics disapproved of abortion in all circumstances and an estimated quarter of women who seek abortions are Catholic.

Here in Canada, and even on the U of T campus, Catholic women have a great deal of organizing to do. Clearly there exists a broad range of opinions on abortion existing at St. Michael's College, but the public silence of dissenters allows the myth of unanimity to prevail. For some of us, family and friends as well as our jobs hang in the balance. Not an easy choice, surely, and one that deserves the support of the feminist community.

Those of us who have no affection for the Catholic Church, as well as those of us who remain precariously within the Church, need to extend our support to those who dare to publicly challenge a system that claims to represent the "REAL" women of the Church.

Faith Nolan: Singer, Social Activist

By Paula Fleck

The designation of February as Black History Month comes as a much needed acknowledgement of the contribution of Black culture to Canadian society, according to local performer Faith Nolan.

In a recent interview, the 26 year old singer-songwriter reiterated the need for people of all racial and cultural backgrounds to develop an increased awareness and appreciation for our cultural diversity. She is involved in developing that awareness.

Faith is known within the Black community and the Women's community in Toronto primarily for her performances at clubs, benefits, and political rallies, yet she is involved in almost all facets of performance. Her musical talents include the guitar, melodic piano, harmonica, various percussion instruments, and, of course, that wonderful voice, but she is also adept at the organizational and promotional aspects of performance.

In early '84, she produced a series of multicultural concerts at The Trojan Horse Cafe in which more than fifty performers of song, dance, and poetry gathered. More recently, in a collective effort, she helped to organize and promote The Festival of Rainbow Women in the Arts, a collection of performances in song, theatre, poetry, and dance by women representing many cultural heritages - every colour of the rainbow. Whether Faith is performing, organizing, or doing both, the primary motivating force behind her work is multiculturalism with a particular focus on women.

"There are a lot of people writing love songs which do not look at the broader realities of life; the fact that we, as individuals, experience problems because we live in the world, problems beyond a one to one relationship. But society encourages love song hits because, like Harlequin Romances, they encourage escapism; they keep people's minds off public issues which really affect our lives. I believe it's for us to struggle when we see injustice in order to grow individually and collectively. I've chosen to struggle through music and performance."

Her music also attempts to reconstruct the experiences of the past. Just as much of the history of women has never been formally documented, Black history has received little formal attention as well. What knowledge we do have comes to us through an oral tradition, and it is through this same tradition that Faith is seeking to educate Black children in the history of Black Canadians and develop in them a stronger awareness of their heritage. Specifically, she has produced a seven song tape called *Child of Mine* for elementary school children in which she sings about many people in early Canadian Black history. She is hopeful that the Toronto Board of Education will make it available to schools and libraries.

"The project is important for children, they learn about themselves and others through participating in cultural exploration. Black heritage gives the students positive images with which to identify and a sense of belonging to Canadian society."



"The most important part of performance for me is not actually performing but the fact that it is through performance that people can share their cultures with each other. It's where we can gain more understanding and respect for our differences. I was really hungry to see shows like Rainbow Women in Toronto."

To Faith, music is first and foremost a vehicle to inform, to educate, and for fun. This becomes apparent in the form and content of her music. She likes to work in an unstructured, loose environment leaving room for spontaneity, improvisation, and the involvement of her audience. In fact, she is partial to performing for children because they reciprocate.

"I especially love playing for kids because there's a give and take dynamic - they perform for me."

Although Faith likes to wallow in the blues now and then, her songwriting primarily addresses topics which have meaning beyond the self and beyond personal experience,

To Faith, racism and sexism come from the same place: hatred which is rooted in ignorance and fear.

"Being Black is the prevalent issue in my life. That's my struggle. It's never been something I've been complacent about. I think racism is worse now than it was in the '60's when it was out in the open and people talked about it and tried to deal with it; whereas now, racism is much more subtle and rarely mentioned. Some people say it's an old cause, but that's not true since hatred of Blacks just becomes manifested in hatred of Asians, hatred of Natives or hatred of Women."

Faith's commitment to multiculturalism is a constructive, positive way of attempting to deal with racism, and to affect social change. She is not interested in erasing our cultural and racial differences but in maintaining them, becoming more aware of them, and celebrating them.

EDITORIAL

In this issue *OtherWise* is experimenting with a new format. Not only have we started to do our own typesetting, in the interest of economy and self-sufficiency, we have also decided, in order to provide a focus for our writers and a greater sense of unity within the paper, to devote a section of *OtherWise* to a specific theme. Lesbianism is our focus in this issue. Obviously we will only be able to touch on a few of its aspects, and while it will not be the focus of the next issue, we hope to continue discussion of lesbianism throughout future papers.

As feminists, we have already made the connections between the personal and the political in understanding our oppression. For example a woman's right to control her own reproduction is more than a personal choice, it is a political issue. And we recognise that all women must have the right to explore every aspect of her sexuality if she so chooses. Unfortunately, the Canadian Charter of Rights includes no prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. But lesbianism is more than a social justice issue. It has ramifications for the basis of our society and the ways in which all women see themselves.

Homophobia, a wide spread problem in this society, is the fear and loathing of homosexuality. This ranges from "queer bashing" to ones reluctance to embrace a same sex friend for fear of being labelled a "dyke" or a "fag". These phobic reactions arise, in part, because visible homosexuality forces one to confront contradictions in the way we have been taught to think. For instance, our society identifies being a woman with being a wife and mother. The existence of lesbians may question this equation and threaten our notion of what it is to be female. When threatened the homophobe responds with the fight or flight syndrome. Fighting homophobes call lesbians ugly, mannish, or frigid and the fleeing homophobe creates ludicrous explanations such as "she is not a real woman" to diminish lesbian existence.

There are other threats to patriarchy. For example, "the corporate woman" is financially independent, a true capitalist, aggressive and ambitious. She challenges the notion of male superiority, the notion of a male breadwinner and if she chooses not to have children, she challenges the ideology of woman as mother. Yet the image of this woman has been co-opted by mainstream culture.

Why then are lesbians more threatening? Two women in a sexual embrace, affirm the power and fact of female sexuality and make it clear where he isn't.

We had much discussion and many disagreements when we were trying to decide what articles should go in the supplement. We all agreed that we wanted a supplement which was lesbian-positive and woman-positive, but how to be sex-positive was more difficult. Even within the context of a feminist, lesbian-positive movement we find ourselves reluctant to discuss sex. This reluctance in part arises from an awareness of a history which has closeted and/or degraded women's sexuality. Finding the voice for our own sexual expression will be a long and experimental process. Let's dare to express our own sexuality.

EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE

Carla-krystin Andrade - Writing Co-ordination
Layout
Margaret Best - Advertising, Fundraising
Carrie Brown - Correspondence, Graphics
Paula Fleck - Layout Co-ordinator
Julianne Hodgins - Proofing, Layout
Luanne Karm - Typesetting, Finances
Kate Lazier - Layout, Graphics
Ingrid McPhail - Typesetting, Headlines
Mary-Louise Noble - Layout, Typesetting
Maureen L. Phillips - Finances
Tori Smith - Layout, Liaison
Terry Teskey - Advertising, Typesetting,
Layout
Nancy Worsfold - Typesetting

THIS ISSUE

Kathy Baker
Madelaine Bassnett
Laurie Bell
Alison Bury
Sean Cunningham
Sue Dwyer
Judy Emond
Natalie Klym
Lorraine Landry
Jennifer McIntyre

We wish a fond farewell to Phyl Serada and Carolyn Cottrell, founding members of the *OtherWise* collective, who have left to pursue other interests. At the same time we welcome Terry Teskey to the collective.

Special Thanks to Robert Mills, Chris Leafloor, Mark a Dad, Luanne a Mum and Scott Hardie of the New Edition

Address all correspondence to:
OtherWise, P.O. Box 857, Station P, Toronto,
Ontario M5B 2Z2

This Issue: January 30, 1985
Printing: K.T. Printing
Typesetting: Nancy and Luanne's computers

Next Issue Copy and Advertising Deadline:
Friday, February 15, 1985

OtherWise is a University of Toronto feminist newspaper and is independently funded. Any donations will be most welcome. All articles published in *OtherWise* do not necessarily represent the views of the collective. Only those articles and editorials signed by the collective have been agreed upon.

In the interest of self-sufficiency and saving money we at *OtherWise* have decided to switch from professional printing to using print out from the computers - various members of the collective and their mothers. We are interested in your feed back. How do you think we look? Was our old format worth an extra \$350 an issue? Which of these type faces do you think is easiest to read? Which are the most difficult?

ARE YOU A EAGER FEMINIST WITH NOTHING TO DO?

OtherWise needs people for advertising, layout, photography, typesetting, graphics, and writing. Come to our regular Friday meetings
2pm in Room 51B New College
For further details 531-5460

Letters to the Collective

Please send letters to:
P.O. 857, Station P, Toronto, MSS 2Z2

The collective retains the right to refuse to print letters which are sexist, classist, racist, or homophobic. (or boring)

Dear *OtherWise*:
It's really exciting to see a feminist paper coming out of U of T. And it looks great. Keep up the good work. I'd like to take out two subscriptions.

Good luck and remember - the pen is mightier than the penis.
In Solidarity,
Donna Mayer

Dear *OtherWise*:
Feminists who gloat too conspicuously over the banning of December Penthouse may have to keep their mouths shut next time the government (or Shoppers Drug Mart) steps in and censors what it considers bad for us. How hard is it to understand that the power of censorship in the hands of our greatly sexist and racist "leadership" is a dangerous thing?

And the banning to Penthouse does nothing to curb the appetites it appeals to, perhaps even aggravates them. I know I'd be a lot hornier without my porno.
Yours truly,
Michael Achtman

To The Collective:

In response to the December editorial, I agree, an escort service is "problematic" because it reinforces the stereotypical image of women as defenseless persons who require the protection of others" but the underlying assumption in the editorial seems to be that the "others" / escorts are male.

As a feminist, I too am committed to solutions to change this image / myth but can't women accompanied by other women be a positive way to topple it? After all, isn't that what occurs in a Take Back the Night march?

I don't know the gender of the employees in the Vic escort service and will never use it. I am uncomfortable with the idea of an escort service but find it less problematic to ask to be accompanied by a woman. True, it is a bandaid solution, but until women's self-defense courses accessible to all women there is safety in numbers - of women.

In Sisterhood,
Jocelyn Ward

To The Collective,
I'd just like to extend a note of congratulations on the success of the first issue of *OtherWise*. We at the Herald were actually a little jealous; you attained a level of professionalism we've been aiming at for 17 years.

It is also good to see something replacing the *Newsmagazine* as an outlet for feminist writing. U of T is pretty staid compared to places like Montreal or even Halifax where the McGill Daily and Gazette have strong feminist foci built in.

If you need any help, be it information from Innis College or just borrowing some hairline; don't hesitate to be in touch. Good stuff. Looking forward to next issue.
Mike Zryd
Editor, Innis Herald

Dear *OtherWise*:

Your paper is willing to exercise its right to refuse to print letters that are sexist, racist, classist, or homophobic. Ted Parkinson, has written (Nov. 29) to complain that this is censorship and selective oppression.

Parkinson should be told that Canada has laws prohibiting the publication of hate literature. Publications that encourage inappropriate discrimination on the basis of race, sex, or sexual preference could be discovered to be hate literature. Newspapers are therefore wary of publishing items that might incite prejudice or hate.

A moral argument justifies this law. Minority groups, such as women, blacks, homosexuals, and leftists, do not deserve harsh treatment simply because they are female, black, gay, lesbian, or on the left. Yet most people in our society discriminate against these people. Therefore, in order to stop the expression of these prejudices, our society needs devices such as appropriate laws and moral persuasion. By announcing that they will not print discriminatory letters, newspapers can help people get rid of their prejudices. (If a newspaper publishes discriminatory letters, it encourages prejudice.)

OtherWise is not guilty of oppression. Instead, your newspaper should be praised for helping to make our society more just.

Sincerely,
Chris Leafloor

Letters continued on page 9

Straight Facts: Lesbians and the Law

By Kathy Baker

In writing this article, several basic observations developed. First, lesbians reflect the same remarkable diversity that is found in the population at large. The law has a different impact on each person individually, but certainly it affects us all. Therefore, it helps us to know the rules of the game. Certainly many of the rules, notably those embodied in the criminal law and the law as it relates to child custody, have been made more favourable in recent years. But we have only to look more closely, and see the absence of Human Rights protection, the lack of provisions for lesbian relationships in tax benefits, to know that there is much room for improvement. Perhaps in discovering what the law is now we can be moved to agitate for the protections yet denied us.

Criminal Law

Nowhere in the Canadian Criminal Code is lesbianism mentioned. In fact, there has never been a specific comment or prohibition against lesbianism. Previously, there was a section of the Criminal Code which provided criminal sanctions against homosexuality but this provision was intended primarily to deal with male homosexuality. Presumably male legislators refused to believe that women did such things, just as Queen Victoria reluctantly refused.

In 1969 Pierre Trudeau made the pronouncement that "the State has no place in the bedrooms of the Nation". Amendments to the Criminal Code were passed that, in effect, decriminalized homosexuality.

The current relevant sections in the Criminal Code are sections 157 and 158, which deal with "Gross Indecency". Section 157 reads as follows: "Every one who commits an act of gross indecency with another person is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for five years."

This provision is severely curbed by the action of Section 158. Essentially, Section 158 provides that any act that might be considered to be "Gross Indecency", is legal if it occurs between any two consenting adults aged twenty-one years or more. In other words, while the Courts might consider lesbian acts to be a form of "Gross Indecency", they are not criminal as long as they occur in private between adults. Note that the age here is twenty-one, not eighteen as it is for straight sex.

Lesbians whose lifestyles are consistent with this exemption have few worries about the criminal law. For others however, areas of concern remain. Group sex is still considered sanctionable under the law. It is not included under the decriminalization of other sexual acts.

This is also, true of sexual acts committed in public. This issue may be more pertinent to gay men who find themselves charged in relation to washroom or bathhouse raids. Nevertheless, women can also be charged.

The Law and Your Lover

Several areas of the law converge in relation to our primary relationships with others. The first and often contentious of these concerns ownership of property. Here the motto "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" proves apt.

There is no precedent for applying the Family Law Reform Act to lesbian couples. What

that means, essentially, is that if your relationship should break up, there is no specific law that will immediately assist in the division of property. Accordingly, you need to be very clear on the issue of who owns what.

Two friends of mine managed this situation by purchasing almost everything individually. When they did buy something together, and it was worth over \$100, they made their own written contract about ownership and possession of the item if the relationship should end. When they did separate, division of property was greatly facilitated.

As you hardly want to become involved in a lawsuit with an ex-lover, it might be a good idea to establish your own system of clarifying ownership. Don't act on the naive assumption that "this is forever" and fail to take even simple precautions. If you do stay together, you won't have lost anything by communicating on this vital issue.

One way to protect yourself and your lover in the event of a separation is to label personal property as either hers or yours. Written lists may sound callous, but will eliminate quibbling at a time when you don't need any

drawn up can cost between \$50 and \$100 and it can save your partner a lot of problems later.

Children

Many lesbians get married and have children before they come out. Other lesbians make a choice to have children, either with a male friend or by artificial insemination. In any case, a lesbian may find herself vitally concerned with the law as it pertains to child custody.

In many instances, the issue of lesbianism never comes up in the custody litigation. There are several possible reasons for this. The contesting party may not know of the woman's lesbianism, or may choose not to make it an issue, or may be unable to obtain evidence of it in the face of the woman's denial. Where lesbianism is acknowledged and is brought out in the custody suit, it is less and less of a deciding issue. In recent cases most courts have ruled that homosexuality is only one factor to be considered in relation to placing a child. Other factors, such as stability in residence, ability to support the child financially, and the relationship between the parent and child may have impact on the Judge's

forthright as possible. Judges dislike disrupting the child's life any more than necessary. For that reason, they will often prefer to have the child remain where he/she is. Accordingly, women will often be in a superior position if they already have custody of the child, that is the child is already living in their home. It may therefore be preferable to maintain custody of the child in the interim after the dissolution of any pre-existing relationship and before the hearing. This will of course depend on whether this is possible.

In summary, then, lesbianism is no longer a bar but remains an obstacle to obtaining child custody. If you are involved in this type of litigation, retain a gay positive lawyer.

Human Rights Legislation

The bald truth is that there is no protection for lesbians in Human Rights legislation. It is perfectly legal to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation. A lesbian can be denied access to accommodation, employment, or basic services simply because of her sexual preference. Unfortunately, there is virtually no recourse under the law.

Sometimes, however, other resources can partially compensate for the omission. If you are dismissed from your job because you are a lesbian, you might try going to your union (if you have one) and have them represent you in a grievance for "unjust dismissal". Some larger unions are willing to assist in this regard. In fact, some unions, notably the Inside Postal Workers, have clauses in their collective agreements that prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Local lesbian or gay organizations may be able to discuss any specific problems you have and offer information and advice. Remember, there is strength in numbers, and the support you will receive from such an organization will be invaluable. In the meantime, lobby for the inclusion of sexual orientation in the Human Rights Code of Canada. Write to your M.P. and M.P.P. and express your concerns. It is highly unlikely that the legislators will be moved by their own accord to rectify this situation.

This article does not pretend to cover the numerous issues under a general title of "Lesbians and the Law". I have covered only some. If you need some specific assistance around issues in the law, there is a partial list of resources below. Bay Courtwatch and TAG will be able to provide you with names of gay-positive lawyers.

Toronto Area Gays (TAG) - 964-6608, Mon-Fri 7-10 pm
Gay Courtwatch - 362-6928
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further turmoil. You might also want to make some kind of informal contract. If you are contemplating a complicated arrangement of joint ownership of valuable property, consult a lawyer.

Property is also a concern as it relates to making arrangements for its disposal in the event of a death. If you have some specific intentions concerning disposition of your assets after death, and want to protect your partner, you'll need a will. Your will is the way in which you ensure that your property is disposed of in the manner you wish.

The Canadian law around wills recognizes what is called "freedom of testation". That means basically that a person can leave their assets to whoever they wish (with some limitations, such as a requirement to provide for dependant dependants). A Hologram will is legal in Ontario. This is a will which is entirely in the testator's (writer's) own handwriting. It should be remembered that a will covering disposal of assets can potentially run into some complex legal problems. If you intend to do your own will, at least purchase a guide on how to do so correctly. Better yet, go to a lawyer and get one done professionally. To have a will

decision as well. Many courts have said that "lesbianism is not a bar" in such matters, although it is often considered.

Paul Rapsey, a law student who recently conducted a study in this area, noted that several factors can increase the chances that a lesbian mother will be awarded custody. First, it will be of great assistance if the woman is able to present her sexuality in an integrated manner with the rest of her lifestyle. Judges are still impressed by "discretion" and seem to prefer it if she does not "flaunt" her sexuality.

Coupled with this is a concern for the child's sexuality. For this reason, it is very advisable to have expert witnesses testify at the hearing to state that "the child's development will not be harmed".

The courts are very interested in the type of environment that the child will be in. If a woman is in a relationship, it seems to be favourably considered, if her partner attends court and testifies as to her relationship with the child and her lifestyle. Again, stability is the catch-word. What is definitely bad news is to give the judge the feeling that something is being hidden. It may be advisable to be as

Homophobia on Campus?

con't

Edited by Luanne Karn

Male and Female Difference
 Although most of our expectations of sex differences were disconfirmed, we did find that, when talking about homosexuality, men were more likely than women to express their attitudes in a personal manner.

People have many different ways of expressing their feelings and ideas, some people talk in a very personalized manner, using personal pronouns and phrases such as "I think that...", or "I feel..." etc. Others prefer to make general statements and remove the focus from themselves by using phrases of the type "People generally...", "You do...", "One would..." or "It is..." etc. We all use both kinds of expressions in varying degrees. Nevertheless, some people use some of these phrases preferentially.

Men typically spoke of homosexuality in the following manners:

"I am a bit upset when they dominate the streets", "I think that's off-side (homosexual contact in public)."

Conversely, women would generalize their comments more often than men: "You have to have a male figure, someone who is a man and who looks like a man (referring to gays or lesbians parenting)", "It's not the place (public areas) for it, any physical contact."

This difference might be attributed to the fact that men are often more assertive than women when they are talking about issues not directly related to their own personal experience. The more personal, assertive responses could also indicate slightly more homophobia among the men we interviewed.

Attitude About Gays and Lesbians

In general, though, men and women expressed similar attitudes regarding most of the issues. Most people attributed homosexuality mainly to socialization: for example, they mentioned the person's relationship with his/her parents, the significance of the first sexual relationship, or negative heterosexual experiences: "A little girl is raped by an older gentleman and she turns off of men and is scared. I think this has been tested and is known for at least some examples." (female)

A significant majority of participants said that they were aware of homosexual physical contact in public and most of them expressed some discomfort with it.

"I think it's disgusting...I cannot still accept it...I felt literally like I was going to throw up... (referring to heterosexual physical contact) I think it's beautiful, people have to express how they feel about their partners or lovers." (female)

Unlike this woman, most people qualified their statements by expressing similar feelings for all physical contact with sexual connotations in public.

"On a subway I really wouldn't like to see it, but I feel the same as (about) heterosexual." (female)

"...I...I don't like any kind of sexual open displays." (male)

Regarding apparent differences between gays and lesbians and heterosexual people, most interviewees stated that they saw no differences, but they mentioned a number of characteristics special to gays and lesbians.

"...Gay people are often very aggressive and very angry at the world, especially the opposite sex." (female)

"...Homosexuals are more insecure in that they are different from what is considered normal." (male)
 "There is often a tendency for males to be effeminate and females to be strong, no (I mean) forward... ordinary women are often more passive sexually." (male)

Other differences mentioned included exaggerated behavior, particular kinds of dress, greater political awareness, more promiscuous gay male relationships, closer and more long-lasting lesbian relationships, greater interest in sex, less traditional roles, more involvement with the arts, more lesbianism among female athletes, and greater bisexuality by lesbians than by gay males.

With regard to gay rights and discrimination against gay men and lesbians, about half the men and women interviewed mentioned job security as a concern and about one-quarter expressed directly their belief that there was a need for legislative protection in this area.

Only one man made it clear that he disagreed with the idea of gays and lesbians teaching in public schools. However, only four men and four women explicitly stated that sexual orientation was irrelevant. Most people qualified their opinions about homosexual teachers with observations such as: "If they tried to teach the beauty of homosexuality to the

children then that would be wrong." (male) "I don't see any reason against it as long as they don't use sexual approaches on the children, same as with heterosexuals." (male)

Parenting was a much more controversial issue. People had similar kinds of reservations but they tended to be much stronger in this area. "As long as they are doing their role modeling." (female)

"As long as they don't indoctrinate their children with homosexuality." (male)

"It's probably dangerous to have sexual relations with anyone who is not the father or mother of the child...the child would sense that your interest in the world is not centered on him and your family." (male)
 "I don't want to sound like Jerry Falwell but I don't think it's the right kind of moral environment." (male)

Conversely, some people expressed quite positive attitudes about gays and lesbians both teaching and parenting.

"They may be better parents, I don't know." (female)

"There are great fears that homosexuals have cravings to have sex every minute of the day. (which I think) is so outrageous." (female)

On the question of gay and lesbian marriages responses were mixed.

"I don't know if I agree with that. I can see that family life would be taken away." (female)

"If you read the Bible, it says homosexuality is a sin, so it's hard to say...I guess it would be okay if they both wanted to." (male)

In general, both men and women expressed similar attitudes towards homosexuality, gays and lesbians parenting or teaching, gay or lesbian marriages and homosexual contact in public. People often presented themselves as liberal (explicitly) or said it was "up to the individual", but both men and women would often contradict such an opinion by setting limits and qualifying their statements (i.e. "as long as they aren't overt about it.") Even though there seems to be an accepting and permissive attitude on this campus, when put to the test, many individual students are still homophobic. This homophobia which we found ranged from subtle examples of discomfort to blatant expressions of pre-judicial opinions and is probably indicative of how strongly "heterosexism" is still engrained in our society and on the University of Toronto campus.

For more information on this study, contact Ilias at 978-3990. Office Hours only.

Don't Despair: Gays on Campus

GLAUT, LGAS and the gay men's and lesbian discussion groups at the Sexual Education Centre (see article on page 7) are the focuses of gay and lesbian activity on campus. On Wednesday nights, GLAUT holds a weekly speaker and discussion series which has featured various representatives of the metropolitan gay community including members of the Body Politic and the Lesbian Phone Line. Chris New estimates that the majority of those who attend GLAUT's meetings come from the campus. He says that "although most in attendance are men, it depends on the speaker. If the speaker is a woman most of the audience will be female". GLAUT also sponsors the Homo Hop dances and in other years has held a Lesbian and Gay Awareness Week. This week however, GLAUT will attempt to organize several good quality events throughout the term instead of trying to "coordinate them into one week".

LGAS also holds a speaker series although the talks are generally of a more academic nature. LGAS rigorously tries to achieve a balance in gay male and lesbian content. Henriques says that the number of people at the meetings has increased steadily over the past four years. "Now", she says, "there are anywhere from 20 to 70 present, depending on the speaker". Henriques also thinks that not even 50% of are students. She encourages anyone to get involved. If you are interested phone 924-6474.

This year there is to be a Gay Literary Journal on campus. Andrew Fenge says that he decided to organize it when the University College Review published the only poem that he had submitted that did not have any gay content: "If it had been because it was the best poem, I wouldn't have minded. But I don't think that's why they chose it." The deadline for submissions is February 22. Please write 500 words or less of poetry, fiction, or essay. Fenge's number is 924-7837.

-K.L.

Conversations with: Marie Claire Blais

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Lesbian and Gay Counselling

By Carla-Krystin Andrade
Did you know that the U of T Sexual Education Centre's Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Discussion Group has been meeting at Hart House since January 1980?

Well, add that fact to your scrapbook of Lesbian Herstory at U of T. For five years this group has provided a milieu in which women-identified-women can meet and discuss issues related to their sexuality, their politics and their lives at U of T. This group has always strived to accommodate all of its members. Whether they were political or apolitical, just coming out or have been out for years, group members soon found that two hours of friendly discussion a week could go a long way in counteracting the periods of feeling isolated as a lesbian on campus. This group is not the only service SEC offers to homosexuals, and it was not the first.

The establishment of gay/lesbian services at SEC was preceded by a proposal for a "specialized adjunct service primarily for lesbians and gay men". It was presented in January '79 in response to a noticeable lack of gay and lesbian services at SEC, since its opening in March '77. Within a month two gay male counsellors (who were also members of Gays and Lesbians at U of T) followed through with the proposal and started a gay phoneline on Monday nights. This was eventually expanded to Gay Day with gay and lesbian counsellors being available for calls and drop-ins. By Fall 1980, the Centre had books and pamphlets on gay/lesbian sexuality and health, an updated list of referrals, gay/lesbian discussion groups and staff who were trained to counsel gays and lesbians regardless of their own sexual orientation.



SEC

Since 1980, SEC has been active on campus organizing their own gay and lesbian events. In 1984, SEC worked with the Gays and Lesbians at U of T in the production of a variety/talent show entitled Auditions.

The services at SEC are essentially the same as they were in 1980 with the exception of Gay Day, which is no longer advertised as such. Gays and lesbians now have the option of dropping in at any time or calling ahead to find out when a gay or lesbian counsellor will be available.

The Lesbian and Bisexual Women's Discussion Group will be having its first meeting in Hart House on January 29th, 5-7p.m. For more information about this group and the Gay Men's group which will be starting soon call SEC at 978-3977.

DIS ALITER VISUM

By Dayle Peters

When I first arrived in Toronto several years ago, I admit I was somewhat overwhelmed with the diversity of people and activities available to the young and impressionable. I found myself looking for a place to belong so I could have a clearer notion of who was "us" and who was "them".

It was no surprise then that I ended up sampling everything from a basketball team to the William Morris Society. I rejected the latter because there was no club jacket available, and basketball, for a person who considers waving strenuous, was out of the question.

One day as I sat longing for a club which would really suit my needs, like in the old days when "The Friendly Female Society, For The Relief Of Poor, Infirm Aged Widows, And Single Women, Of Good Character, Who Have Seen Better Days" was around, I hit on a new idea, and since the F.F.S.R.P.I.A.W.S.W.G.C.W.H.S.B.D. was now defunct, I hoped it would work out well. Why not, I said to myself, become a lesbian? And I set out to find out about initiation fees and membership requirements.

My first stop was the Cameo Clubhouse. I asked at the door if I could speak to the leader of the Club because I was interested in joining. She told me that there was no leader because lesbians do not support hierarchical organizations.

"Oh," I said, quite embarrassed, "well, how might one get more information about becoming a lesbian?"

A few minutes later, I was deeply engrossed in conversation. I told her my difficulty in finding a club to join in which I felt comfortable. I explained that my singing voice was not very good, and that I didn't have a car. She assured me that neither were necessary for becoming a lesbian although a car would have been nice. "What do I have to do?" I asked.

"Just have sex with women" she said.

"My brother does that and he's not a lesbian," I protested.

"Well, you should also read," she explained. "There are several politically correct books you should know about; you should also attend rallies, marches, and demonstrations; you should correct people who refer to women as 'girls', and you should be vegetarian, pro-choice, and wear an odd number of earrings."

"Do I have to pay?"

"No, in fact, the less money you have the better, and any extra money you do come into should be discreetly donated to a woman-positive organization."

When I expressed by doubts about being able to meet all these requirements, she thought a moment, then said, "Well, I suppose you don't have to do the reading - a lot of lesbians don't, even if they say they do. The marches and stuff could be skipped if you're busy. And now that I think about it, you can eat chicken and fish with a pro-life attitude without wearing any earrings at all and still be a lesbian."

"I guess it just comes down to the sex then?"

"Actually, there are some lesbians who are celibate, so I think you could avoid the sex, if you'd like."

Trying not to betray my confusion, I asked, "What is it to become a lesbian, then?"

"It's the sharing of that common bond of persecution. It's being a part of a group that will claim you as its own long after you have disowned it, and it's a place of familiarity to which you can return if the other world becomes too much."

"Sounds like a family."

"Yeah, sort of, except you don't spend Christmas together, and it's a lot bigger."

"Do I get a club jacket?" I asked hopefully.

"Well, not really," she said, "but you can wear a button."

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Girl Meets Girl, Girl Gets Girl

The Anatomy of an Encounter

By Kate Lazier

...really, it IS your choice. I won't jump you, promise. I don't like tricks: buying drinks, slow grinding dances, waking up in strange places, keeping it cool, keeping it honest, no games, the question only really means one thing: I want you, sex without getting to know you...maybe in the morning. (Lets make it easy honey I've never done this before)...

"What?" asked Helen, her hearing impaired by the persistent beat.

...she didn't hear, say it again louder....

"I said" Liz moved closer to Helen so that her lips were within inches of Helen's delicately shaped ear, "would you like to come home with me?"

...she wants me to...."Impressionable Girl Seduced by Vicious Lesbian" she doesn't look too vicious to me and she's not ugly and fat like they say. Jane says its because No Man Will Look At Them, no choice...but, I'm here... wanting something, to find Diana? to discover that we Both wanted to be more than best friends, do myself a favour, forget that dream....an answer? why not?

Helen paused for what seemed to Liz to be an excruciatingly long time. "Yes, I'd like that" answered Helen finally.

...rewards come fast-take a chance-Make a Hot Fantasy Come True. Phone 696-SEXY, its not so simple, requires planning.

Choice and Consent, tricky really, we choose what we want in bed- another woman in this or that way, we both consent to these acts, but can we, do we want to choose anything: rape fantasies? bondage?... Victorian Repression/Liberated Expression? Consciousness/Uncosiness? Bad girl/Good girl? officially women are socialized to like things they don't really want, masochism say, ideals must be reasonable, there is only so much I can change in myself, enough. I don't have to wait until after the revolution to find out what I want....

The two women finished their drinks and found their ways out of the smoky, crowded club. "I've got a bike but it's not far to walk" Liz offered after she entered into the night air. "Oh I brought a bike too" "Great, it must be some sort of sign" said Liz with a friendly laugh

...from the gods probably, hard to believe, going home with someone I don't even know. I never did this even with guys, no, not true. I knew what to expect then, its always the same. the twenty minute workout and you're lucky if you come....I just wanted her. I didn't think of how, kissing is the same I guess, you can do all the things you like done to you. Diana said "if only you were a guy". I said "but why not?"...She didn't get it...

In silence they rode through the deserted streets.

....Casual Sex. Sex for the

Sake of Sex, no babies, no I Love You. "Lesbians don't like Alienated Sex, they like Relationships" aren't women supposed to want that? so many women Do want marriage, security, the two are not mutually exclusive sex in and out of friendships. would the Real Lesbian Sexuality please stand up? no, lie down, I say...I just know I'm going to try it. I can't distinguish between sex I come to "honestly" (is it possible?) and sex They taught me, but they didn't tell me to sleep with women. I know that for sure....

....a normal neighborhood. Mummies and Daddies and good little kiddies that play house and grow up to be more Mummies and Daddies. little girls discover what teddy can do for them under the covers. blood pacts...living for our best friends. "can Jane stay over?" I just put 2 and 2 together and then I was lost, feeling this mysterious absence. "but I'm just like any one else" waiting...thinking the right guy will come along and make me forget, had to move out to find out, nobody at home is saying "we hope you girls live happily ever after"...

"We're here" said Liz as she rode up the curb. Helen followed Liz to the side door where they locked their bikes.

....all those movies of girls running through the fields, hand in hand, meaningful embraces and wide-eyed pauses, not getting any closer than I Love You, doesn't help now, she'll think something is wrong, should tell her...

Once inside, Liz invited Helen to sit down on the couch. "Can I get you a beer?" asked Liz "Yes please" replied Helen.

...Anything to make it easier...

Liz brought the drinks over and sat down on the couch a non-threatening distance away from her guest. They both attended their drinks in silence. "Is this Okay?" Liz inquired as she put her arm around the unsuspecting but willing Helen. Helen nodded an answer. Entranced, Liz watched Helen bring the bottle to her inviting lips. Helen casually turned to face her host to find herself locked into the gaze of Liz's admiring eyes. Slowly, savoring the electricity of the moment, Liz leaned over and kissed the woman she was aching for.

....that tentative timid energy, breath long, thoughtful and held, into the bedroom, each button one by one, must go slow, beautiful defined collarbone, solid shoulders, don't stare, she's uncomfortable....

A broad smile broke on Liz's lips as she apprehended the miraculous sight of Helen's slender shoulders. She let herself explore Helen's every contour.

"Liz?" said Helen quietly, "There's something I want to tell you...I've never done this before"

Liz paused as she let what she had just heard sink in. "Thank you for telling me, Do you feel uncomfortable? He

don't have to do this if you don't want to" "I didn't say that" said Helen with a suggestive smile. "Well then, where were we?" Liz said as she resumed her disrobing of the untouched woman.

....good instincts, felt like I was leading it all, need to know why, imbalances, initiation. (I'M taking her pants off, I'M making her nipples stand up,) Power in bed - it's not so clear, she actively lets me do it, because its another woman you think you're equal, but it's there in roles or a moment it's there.....

...relief, feeling her now, skin going to the touch, her confidence, my waiting for my cue, sharp, alive air coming out of my center, hold it, hold it...

Suddenly, Helen grabbed Liz's top and pulled it over her head. They embraced with a new found intensity.

....changing the mood, tits, clits, finding bony fleshy edges, her sparks all over me, upbeat breathing 1-2-3-4 1-2 1-2 1-2, woman on top, woman on bottom, discomfort pointy hipressing down, shift to comfort, to comfort her "it's okay", kissing it better, she dares...is she already? new patterns, cunning linguists, What's experience anyway? finding her way, a precarious posture, power of the teeth, trusting the tongue, don't stop, no stop, non stop.

The musky scent of Liz's womanhood wafted up and tickled Helen's nose. It tantalized her. She buried her tongue into the moistness of her folds.

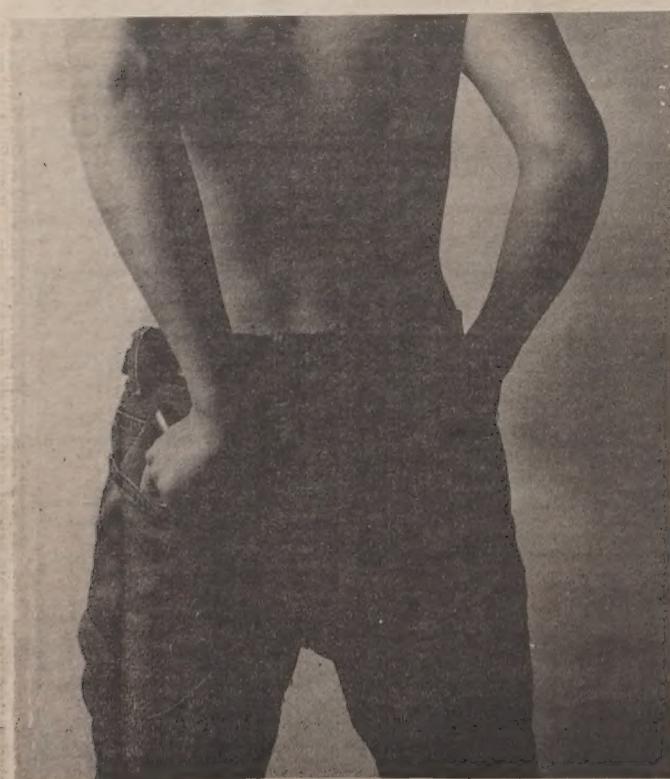
....that exhibition? the ladies plates, Georgia O'Keeffe's flowery and floppy, rosy and deep, inbetween these lips, look, more, whetted, wetted, drowning, at 4 years jumping off the mainland, currents lurking, take me under, in, up, up for air, breath in out in out, over under the waves rolling on and on.....and on.....

THE ONLY PLACE TO BE



TOGETHER

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Letters con't

Dear Collective,
It is great to see a feminist newspaper emerging from the U. of T., not one of the world's most progressive institutions. But I am sorry you have chosen to do a hatchet job on Dale Spender and misrepresent me at the same time. And I hate your cutie headline: apart from the fact that deconstruction is the name of a lethal and pessimistic effluence of male-stream thought, Nancy Worsfold does not deconstruct this Dale Spender. She invents her. She also misrepresents what I was doing at the meeting. I think it was clear to most of the audience that the exchanges between Dale and myself were affectionate banter between old friends, happy about an occasion which was not academic, hyper-intellectual nor hyperated, but just plain feminist celebration with a satisfying dose of shared good humour.

I don't know what "empirical feminism" is, unless its actual feminism: this is not to be confused, surely, with pseudo-social science. I don't know why the limits of men's language should be the limits of women's experience, and I'm puzzled about the process in which spoken words are converted into a concrete police force. I have been roughed up by cops in my time - empirically - and it was their mitts and not their words which were engaged. I also don't know how to organize data in "whatever way" one considers "objective": objectivity certainly includes the notion of dispassionate distance, and anyone who found Dale Spender dispassionate can't have been at the same event that I was. And I don't believe this was an audience exclusively of true believers. As Nancy omitted the courtesy of naming the sponsors, it should be mentioned that they were The Oxford University Press, The Women's Bookstore and Resources for Feminist Research. In any case there were plenty of women there who could have told Nancy

why the response to the statement that women are oppressed can never, never be "So what?"

Dale Spender brings knowledge, wit, passion and irreverence to her work, and any movement needs these things. She affirms the joy of sisterhood, which doesn't mean that we forget the seriousness and indeed the terror of patriarchy; it means we renew our mutual strength to deal with these. Surely our other wisdom must reflect this too? In sisterhood
Mary O'Brien

WORSFOLD RESPONDS

I would like to begin this response to Mary O'Brien's letter with an apology to deconstructionists. The leader "Spender Bender: Nancy Worsfold De-Constructs Dale" was not of my choosing. Although I liked the alliteration, I was a little nervous that someone could object to the false advertising. To clarify briefly, deconstruction is a philosophical/theoretical tool created by the French philosopher, Jacques Derrida, a tool which I did not use. I am surprised by O'Brien's quick dismissal of deconstruction as, in my

opinion, some of the most exciting current feminist thought is coming from the French "post-structuralist" and "deconstructionist" schools. Just as feminists have adopted and assimilated the work of Marx, we can use Derrida's ideas. The deconstructionist notion that western culture sets up binary oppositions which are inherently hierarchical seems, to me, to lend itself very easily to feminism. Is it not a legitimate part of the feminist project to "deconstruct" the opposition of male and female? Is it not useful to install a notion of the "feminine" which is not absence, which is not Other? Our name, OtherWise, can be understood as polysemic. My favorite meaning is the pun of calling ourselves Other, thus claiming the Other as our own thereby disrupting the Otherness and absence of the Other.

As for the "charge" that I "invented" Spender, I agree entirely; but this raises questions of interpretation. I can never know exactly what Spender intended with her words. Academics often argue about the correct interpretation of someone's words, each trying to draw asymptotically closer to the intended meaning of an author -- to what s/he really meant. But surely a listener or a reader takes an active part in the creation of meaning. If the "true" meaning of a sentence is whatever the speaker intended to say, then one can never know the meaning of someone's words. Or, conversely, if meaning exists uncomplicatedly in words, in texts, then one has to assume a simple and transparent relationship between words and things. For instance, we all know that "chick" doesn't just refer to a woman who looks like a young hen, there is much implied to a feminist by the word. But what I understand by the word is not necessarily intended by the speaker. Yes I invented Spender, I invented what I thought her words meant.

I invented the term "empirical feminism" to criticise ideas which I attribute to Spender and other feminists. The idea which I tried to take to task was the notion that there is a simple relationship between language and "reality". When I wrote of language as a police force I intended to make a metaphor. Concrete police forces limit our actions and, I believe, language limits our thoughts. It is very difficult to have ideas for which we do not have words. For example, we seem to assume that anyone called "doctor" is a "mister". I tried to attenuate this notion by adding that we can and must push at the edges of language to create new words and new ideas.

O'Brien accuses me of saying that the limits of men's language are the limits of women's experience. The text reads: "the limits of language become the limits of our world." Obviously language does not literally limit our experience, but language does limit our interpretation of our experience. How anyone, female or male, understands their experience is mediated by language - and culture and personal history and so on. I used the word "world" in the same sense as I would use it if I said, "My world fell apart." My intended meaning was that the

subjective reality which is one's "world" is informed by language, very (in)formed by language.

I must admit to being confused by the terms "men's language" and "male stream thought". The sexism in English is not benign, in fact I would say that it limits my life, but does that make it a men's language? Are men's minds and tongues inherently different from women's? We have been told for centuries that our minds are different from men's, why would a feminist perpetuate this idea? Would women create an inherently different language? I assume the term "male-stream thought" is meant to imply that main stream thought is male. Is main stream thought male? Or is it controlled by men? Can an idea have a sex?

O'Brien disagreed with my assertion that Spender organizes her data in whatever way she considers

objective. Touché. When she claimed to be able to prove or disprove any point, I should have said that she arranges her data in any way she considers expedient.

I may have "omitted the courtesy" of naming the sponsors of the "plain feminist celebration" in question, but it was only because I believed that the object of the evening was to sell Spender's books.

The suggestion that I do not care about women's oppression seems to me both preposterous and unfair. I feel like a child brought before a teacher to be chastised. How could I be uninterested in my own oppression? On the contrary, I feel that the discussion of women's oppression is too important to be treated as a simple, straight forward question of the wrongs of men against women.

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CARRIE BROWN

Ladies Know Your Cars

By Ten-Speed Smith

Now that you have settled into the passenger seat of this big yellow taxi of academia it's time for Lesson One in defensive learning. Let's start with the owner's manual of knowledge - the textbook. As you pull out of the drive your instructor will probably try to convince you that the authors of these books have enormous brains with which they understand the world, and hundreds of perfect books from which to choose.

Pull over ma'am, let's have a chat. Should we believe everything we read - it looks nice, seems plausible, and the professor likes it. You're right, they're useful but quality control slips up sometimes - biases, half truths, omissions, and distortions creep in like so many billboards on the Florida highway. To be sure biases can be a healthy thing, as in she's got a bias against drunken driving, and every academic makes important choices in his/her journey to content. However, some writers are stuck in a big bad parking lot: sexism, racism or some other prejudice has stalled their intellectual transmission. Yet time after time we are referred to owner's manuals which miss half the engine by

ignoring or denigrating the lives and work of women. The BIG BLINDSPOT of the university curriculum is that too often you can't see the woman in the academic's rear view mirror.

So here we are on the free way: we've got this owner's manual, we've got this car, and the final exam is down the road. Now, dear, don't throw the car away with the steering wheel. Speeding's not allowed, but there are other ways: honking for example. For instance, in a course I took recently the manual we were given left us wondering if, in fact, any women actually lived in the society described. Rather than throwing up our hands, or throwing out the book, or just plain throwing up, one cool young dude raised her concerns in tutorials and lectures.

Screeching to a halt, we saw discussion spring up like a long awaited gas station. The professor pulled over, we talked and Daddy didn't take the T-bird away. In fact he took time to discuss the book's androcentricity with the class and even included the issue as an essay topic. The moral of the story is that dialogue is a part of education, and sometimes a little talk will go a long way. Happy driving ladies.

The Little Matchgirl Is Missing, Etc.



Once upon a time there was a woman who wanted to cry. And everytime she wanted to cry, she would go to her bookshelf and open a copy of Hans Christian Anderson. She would read a special story. This was how the woman had cried as a child. As her mother read to her, her tears dampened the picture of a sad barefoot girl, the little match girl who died in the snow.

Now this particular time when the woman wanted to cry, she went with her book to a secret, special place. When she got there, she carefully opened the book. She went to the page. It was the right page, but- what? Something horrible had happened. The page where the match girl had been was blank. And yet, how could this be? Had someone taken her away? Could she still be found?

And the woman looked into her heart and decided that she must be found. And so she went searching.



There is a kind of thievery that takes place every day. It is the seemingly benign abduction of images from out of their original context for the purpose of using them in the free-for-all of a consumer oriented culture. In an effort to sell things to people, the they/they/us/we's of the world divert the meaning of an image from its original and intended audience, and redesignate it to a new audience, the consumer, who sees it not as itself, but as the sponsor of a product or an idea.

The "You've come a long way baby," campaign of an American cigarette company is a now infamous example of this: the historical context would be the women's movement of the early 1970's; the image that has been seized is that of the new woman there portrayed as a carefree cigarette smoking gal, implying that cigarettes alone are a form of liberation.

The nature of an image depends more upon the taste and values of the individual who has edited it for public consumption than it does upon the narrative

from which it emerged. In the cigarette ad, the editor's shadow is strongly cast, suggesting that the woman posing is so far from her historical antecedent- a real woman, probably with unshaven legs, probably over-worked, and yes, probably a cigarette smoker, that she is like a humorous imposture walking both sides of the fence: daring yes, but daddy likes her too.

The obvious drawback of this procedure is that it relies on the minimization of information and the maximization of attitude. In doing so, it allows misconceptions to creep into the pool of common knowledge. To use an obscure example, and one not from advertising, I call upon the third century martyr, St. Agatha. Young Agatha died protecting her virginity. One of the terrible molestations she suffered before her death was the cutting off of her breasts; and so she is pictured, a young woman holding her breasts on a plate. Those breasts must have seemed an unlikely emblem of a virgin saint, for they were misappropriated in the popular mind as being either loaves of bread, or buns, of which she

has become the patron saint. The tolerance one might have for the harmlessness of this kind of metamorphosis (bells, breasts, who cares?) would be plentiful if the popularization of something did not also require its impoverishment. As an image is co-opted, it is necessarily stylized, simplified, and emptied of whatever meaningful complexities it was created to embody in the first place.

One ad in particular caught my eye last December. It was late in the evening and snowy outside as I rode on an escalator. It was closing time at the Eaton centre, and union organizers were leafletting staff as they emptied from the darkened commodity palace. As I ascended, I looked above me, and behold, there she was- finally the little match girl with her bundle of matches selling not matches at all, but some sort of Christmas consumer wish. And, yet, again, how could this be?

The real story of the little match girl is the tragedy of a poor child who dies in the snow. The story encompasses the event of her death, including the visions of comfort that she

experiences in the flames of her little matches. As told by Hans Christian Anderson, it is a dark and moralistic tale about the fleetingness of the mortal world, about the glory awaiting those who suffer, and the ineffability of heaven.

Told by the advertisers, the match girl is merely a candle holding nymph enchanted by Christmas splendor. Looking at the ad closely, I was both relieved and disappointed to discover that she was not a real match girl at all. Instead she is the match girl's doppelganger. She strikes a chord of uncomfortable familiarity, and yet, because advertising is advertising and nothing more, the nymph is able to borrow from the match girl story without ever betraying her source. She is empowered by an act of recognition that occurs on a sub-conscious level. This is what the advertisers are banking on. The conscious recognition is never allowed to take place. It is thwarted by the swell and force of the larger narrative which states unconditionally, that Christmas is found in the splendor of department stores and in the hearts and shopping bags of those who can buy.

WiseWords

The woman who has been given sexual freedom without real financial and social independence will find herself still bartering

NETWORKING

THURSDAY, JANUARY 31

A Question of Rape
Part of the SEC film series.
7:00 p.m.
Sidney Smith Hall, Room 2117
FREE

Anti-Nuke Show
by Powerhouse Gallery, includes
works by 24 Canadian artists in
various media. Show continues
to Feb. 16.
A-Space Gallery, 204 Spadina
Ave. Info: 364-3227/8

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1

Women and Science Conference
Keynote address by Ursula
Franklin: "Women and Science:
Past, Present and Future". Two
days of workshops and films,
plus a panel discussion.
Organized by Women's Resource
Centre, Women's Issue
Collective and Ontario Public
Interest Group. Bilingue and
childcare available.
FREE - All welcome

University of Guelph
Info: Women's Resource Centre
(824-4128 x 8559) or OPIRG
(x2129)

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3
Ravenwing: Ritual and
Introduction to Wimmin's
Spirituality
Donation Requested

7:00 p.m.
St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor St.
W. To register call Janice
Canning 626-5465 or 533-2738

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 4
Abortions North and South
Part of the SEC film series.
Theatre 3, Northrop Frye Hall
7:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6
Just Horsing Around
Every Wednesday night there is
an open stage for all aspiring
artists.
8:00 p.m.
\$2.00/\$1.00 for performers

New Trojan Horse Cafe
179 Danforth Ave

Not A Love Story
Part of the SEC film series.
7:00 p.m.
Ramsey Wright Building Room 117

Ingrid Macdonald's
Dear Enigma Person,

Dear Enigma-Person,
There's a person in my
SOC100 class. She wears leather
pants. She says people are gay
these days because it's trendy.
What's going on out there?
Signed,
The Hell of Loneliness

Dear Well,
Could it be that you're
behind the times? When you came
out to your folks, didn't they
grab the Bloomingdale's
catalogue and say, pick
anything, we don't care what it
costs, didn't they phone New
York presto? Were you not top to
toe in new Calvin Kleins in less
than 48 hours? You say no?
Incroyable....

CLASSIFIEDS

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a word with \$2.00 minimum
charge. Send ad and method of
payment to:
OtherWise, P.O. Box 857,
Station P, Toronto, M5S-222.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16

Their Story/Our Story
100 Years of Women at U of T
Profiles of humour, courage,
wisdom, love and passion by
storyteller Helen Porter.
Sponsored by Woodsorth
College.

Tickets are \$6.00 & \$4.00 at
Woodsorth College.
7:30 p.m.
George Ignatieff Theatre
(Also Feb. 13)
Info: 978-4444/2415

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Audrey Rose, African Dancer
Nakia Kleist, Native
Storyteller
8:00 p.m.
\$4.00

New Trojan Horse Cafe
179 Danforth Ave.

POETRY READING WITH DIONNE

BRAND, MARLENE PHILIP, LILLIAN
ALLEN, JOAN STEVENS AND NAKEDA
SILVERA.
8:00 p.m.
\$3.00 and \$2.00

Gallery 940, 940 Queen St. E.

Info: 466-8840
Note: also Feb. 23

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20

Videotapes about black music

by Pauline Dean
8:00 p.m.
\$3.00 and \$2.00

Gallery 940, 940 Queen St. E.

Info: 466-8840
Note: also Feb. 23

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28

Profiling: Change, Challenge,
Celebration
School of Graduate Studies'
graduates speak about their
grad and career lives. 12:15
p.m. Debates Room, 2nd Floor,
Hart House
Bring lunch, dessert and coffee
will be served.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Equality Rights: A National
and International Perspective
with Prof. Bisele Cote-Harper.
1:15 p.m.
Moot Court, Flavelle House,
Faculty of Law, 78 Queen's Pk.
Cres.

NANCY WHITE

8:00 p.m.
\$4.00
New Trojan Horse Cafe, 179
Danforth Ave.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23

Women's Seminar on Art
Includes international and
Canadian speakers. Sponsored by
A-Space.
Times and Location TBA
Info: 364-3227/8
Note: also Feb. 24

WOMEN'S DANCE

With Entertainment and DJ
8:30
A-Space Gallery,
204 Spadina Ave.
Info: 364-3227/8

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Performances: 3 Poets \$4.00
A-Space, 204 Spadina Ave. Info:
364-3227/8

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27

Sex and the Constitution
Legal theory workshop with
Prof. Sylvia Law, New York
University Law School
12:15 - 1:45 p.m.
Solarium, Falconer Hall,
Faculty of Law, 84 Queens Pk.
Cres.

The Coming Reformation in
Science.
with Prof. Ursula Franklin
Part of the 1984-1985 Wiegrand
Lecture Series: "Four Women
Lecture on Challenges to
Faith". 8:00 p.m.
Medical Sciences Auditorium,
1 King's College Circle

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28

Profiling: Change, Challenge,
Celebration
School of Graduate Studies'
graduates speak about their
grad and career lives. 12:15
p.m. Debates Room, 2nd Floor ,
Hart House
Bring lunch, dessert and coffee
will be served.

Intermediate Weedo Course
Register at SAC \$25.00
Course times: 4:30 - 6:30
Info: SAC 978-4911

SUNDAY, MARCH 3

Discussion with artists
exhibiting in *Visions of Black
Women*.
Co-sponsored by Women's Art
Resource Centre.
2:00 p.m.
\$2.00/\$1.00
Info: 466-8848

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6

Opening, Experimental Art Show
with Carla Smith, Janice Oakley
and Raffy
Sparks Gallery, 114 Queen St W
Hours: Wed. 3:00 to 8:00 p.m.,
Thurs, Fri, Sun, 1:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Info: 531-1243

Christie McGraw
singer/songwriter
9:00 p.m.
\$2.00
Free Times Cafe
Info: 967-1078
Note: also Mar. 7

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sun. 12-5:00 979-9624

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RE-MEMBERING

by Marianna Valverde

My grandmother never told me the whole story of her life, but she did recount fragments. Unfortunately she died four years ago. I have pieced together this story from what I remember of her, and from what my mother and my aunts have told me.

My grandmother's family came from the north of Spain: her name was Pilar Gorostegui, a solid Basque name. She retained this name even after she married, as women do in Spain. She was born in 1890 of an upperclass family, and although they had lost most of their money she remained true to her class throughout the turbulent years of this century. Pilar's grandfather had gambled away all of the family's land when he was on a ship going from Spain to Cuba. He was the governor of a province of Cuba in the years preceding the war in which Cuba was "rescued" from Spain by the U.S. Pilar's father was an army general. Some of her ancestors were minor Polish nobles whose portraits still grace the now dilapidated ancestral home outside of Madrid. She was blonde and blue-eyed and had very definite views on most things in life.

Around 1911 or 1912, Pilar decided to marry a Viennese engineer. Not only did she marry a foreigner, but she later discovered that he was a Jew. They had many children by this time so she did not consider leaving him, but she did tell him that if she had known earlier she never would have married him.

To the end of her life she remained very much the matriarch. She always set the social and political tone in her large family; her husband, one suspects, was very much the foreigner and not solely by reason of his nationality and race.

She once told me with great glee the story of her marriage to Wilhem Gefäll - a name she Spanicized to Guillermo Gefäll. They announced that the wedding was to happen at noon, but then cleverly avoided the crowds by actually marrying two hours earlier. She was living in the small town of Avila whose populace had few ways of entertaining themselves other than attending rituals such as the wedding of the oldest daughter of the town's military commander.

She immediately began to have children, eleven in total: three girls, then three boys, then three girls, and the youngest was a boy. There was another baby boy but he died in infancy of an infection contracted in the hospital where he was delivered.

During the Republican years of 1931-36 she opposed the government and tried to do her bit for throne and altar. She would cheat at the polls by voting on behalf of all the nuns she knew were not going to leave the convent to vote. In 1936 the Spanish Civil War broke out so she enthusiastically embraced the cause of her class and religion by supporting Franco. Her only brother was a colonel on Franco's side and he was killed in the war.

Pilar and her family spent the three years of the war in the northern town of San Sebastián. They had gone to San Sebastián for the summer holidays in 1936 but could not return to their home in Madrid because it was under Republican control. They were joined by the equally numerous children of Pilar's brother. My mother remembers the three years of the war as an extended holiday during which the adults had too much on their minds to worry about disciplining the twenty or so children of the household.

At one point during the war it became necessary to move to another town down the coast. My Viennese grandfather, who had managed to obtain diplomatic immunity by becoming an "honorary consul" of Austria, arranged for a Nazi German destroyer that was "helping" Franco's army to pick up the whole family. The pretext was that they were all moving to Austria, but they were just deposited in a safer town. My mother and all the children were told that they had to pretend to be Austrian, but as they spoke little German one imagines that the sailors were not fooled. They greatly enjoyed the adventure and did not realize the terrible irony of their Jewish ancestry until much later.

After the war they took up where they left off in Madrid. My Grandfather worked in a patent office so he probably did not earn a large sum, but they still had a cook and a couple of live-in maids. My grandmother supervised servants but did not actually cook or sew very much.

As the years went by the family became very politically divided. Some of her children followed their mother's political path by becoming members of the right-wing Catholic organization Opus Dei. Others, like my own mother, joined the anti-Franco opposition. My mother married a young poet whom my Grandmother considered "not of our

class, you know." Later some of Pilar's grandchildren became Fascist thugs while others were imprisoned for left-wing activities. Some of her thirty or so grandchildren became the communists that the Civil war supposedly had eliminated. All these divisions in the family seem to have led my grandmother to retreat more and more into religion and further away from politics. I always remember, in her rare visits to my family in Barcelona, that she would attend Mass daily and encourage us to pray for "peace in the world" - and in the family, one suspected.

Most of my Grandfather's family had left Vienna for the U.S. prior to the Nazi take-over. My great-grandmother, a 90-year-old blind woman, and her 60-years old unmarried daughter had stayed behind. My grandfather probably could have helped them escape to Spain, but under the influence of Franco's propaganda, he did not know of the threat that Hitler posed to all Jews. Around 1940 both old women were taken from their Vienna apartment and sent to concentration camps. Nobody knows just when or where they died. My mother believes that the grief and guilt my grandfather felt contributed to his premature death in 1954. Pilar outlived him by many years, living in a somewhat run-down apartment in the heart of Madrid with her unmarried daughter until she died at 89.

During her eventful life Pilar witnessed the decline of the aristocratic class to which she so loyally clung. She lived to see some of her grandchildren, myself included, poke fun at her "noble" Polish ancestors and pooh-pooh a gold cross decoration given by the Empress of Austro-Hungary to a female ancestor of hers.

Her life was fraught with tragic deaths, both in and out of war time. One daughter died at 25 of a heart attack and her favorite, the youngest boy, was killed in a traffic accident in Rome just as he graduated from architecture school. She also had to cope with a mentally ill eldest daughter who went to Berlin in the 1941, ostensibly to study music, but in fact she sang in cabarets and shamed herself by having a child when she was not married. The child was raised by Pilar as her youngest daughter instead of as her eldest granddaughter.

With such an eventful life, it is no wonder that toward the end of her life she only wished for "peace in the world."

Mariana Valverde teaches in the Women's Studies program and will someday write a novel about her maternal family (from a socialist-feminist perspective, of course.)

We invite readers to send us their stories of their grandmothers or great aunts. We hope to keep this a regular column. Please include a photo, preferably though not necessarily, of your grandmother in her youth. Send submissions to: P.O. Box 857, Station P, Toronto, MSS 2Z2.



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